

THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO



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NEWS RELEASE

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City Heights Metro Center Groundbreaking Saturday, February 22nd

Future Jobs and Affordable Housing the Focus of \$47 Million City Heights Redevelopment Project

SAN DIEGO – Another step in the remarkable renaissance of the City Heights community takes place tomorrow, Saturday, February 22nd, at 10am with a groundbreaking ceremony for the City Heights Metro Center redevelopment project. Mayor Dick Murphy and Councilmember Toni Atkins, along with public, private and community representatives, will take part in the public ceremony at 39th Street and Polk Avenue, officially marking the start of development for the mixed-use facility. Construction is expected to last for more than a year on the \$47 million project, which is scheduled to open in spring 2004.

Spearheaded by a partnership between the City of San Diego's Redevelopment Agency, San Diego Revitalization Corporation/Price Charities, San Diego Workforce Partnership, San Diego Interfaith Housing Foundation and City Heights Community Development Corporation among others, the Metro Center project incorporates office space for regional job training and placement, retail space, a community meeting room, computer center and daycare center, along with an affordable housing element.

"This new career center will bring a wide variety of opportunities to the residents of City Heights and the surrounding Mid-City communities. A key part of our regional economic development strategy is to foster and train a workforce for local industry, and the Metro Career Center is the engine that will drive this strategy," said Councilmember Atkins. "When you add in the quality affordable housing units that the Metro Villas provides, along with park and family amenities, a Head Start daycare program, and the career training center, it's evident that the Metro Center will benefit the entire community."

The project will feature the Metro Career Center; a custom designed 81,500 square-foot office building and the Metro Villas, a 120-unit, affordable housing development.

"Projects like the Metro Center make up the core of our efforts to achieve Goal #3, creating neighborhoods we can be proud of," said Mayor Murphy. "I'm very pleased that this redevelopment project will transform a blighted area of City Heights. And I'm equally happy that it will provide much-

needed affordable housing and a regional job training site."

The Metro Career Center will primarily house the San Diego Workforce Partnership along with approximately a dozen other public and private agencies that will provide a host of services to assist people from throughout the San Diego region. The Workforce Partnership, together with the San Diego Community College District, provides job training, employment assistance, job referrals, career counselors and workforce development professionals. San Diego Workforce Partnership will be moving from their current facility in Kearny Mesa, to the spacious Metro Center located in the heart of a community in need of its services and right on several public transit lines.

"The services of the new Metro Career Center have never been more crucial than now to the enrichment of San Diego's workforce," said Larry Fitch, President and CEO of the San Diego Workforce Partnership. "New research shows that San Diego is experiencing a skills gap, as we have too few high-tech workers and too many low-wage earners. The Career Center can help to bridge this gap with access to education, training and career ladder information. We can provide the basis for economic mobility, allowing low-skill, low-income workers an opportunity to rise above their situations."

The \$25.5 million Metro Villas housing component is comprised of nine three- and four-story apartment buildings, a laundry building and resident activities building. Designed for very low-income residents, the Metro Villas offers units of one to four bedrooms. A 489-space parking structure would be built to serve both the commercial and residential components of the project.

Conveniently located next to the recently completed State Route 15 freeway at University Avenue, the Metro Center site is adjacent to three new parks including Teralta Park – built on the four-acre cut and cover deck, four new bridge decks covering the State Route 15 freeway, City Heights transit plaza and the express bus service line. There will also be four new elementary schools built in the City Heights area in the next three to four years.

"The Metro Center redevelopment project is yet another shining example of the public/private redevelopment partnership currently taking place in City Heights," said Hank Cunningham, director of the City's Community and Economic Development Department. "Thanks to the pace-setting Urban Village project, and others like the Metro Center following its lead, City Heights is rapidly becoming a national community revitalization model."

The project was made possible through a unique collaborative effort of the City of San Diego, its Redevelopment Agency, City Heights Community Development Corporation, San Diego Interfaith Housing Foundation, San Diego's Housing Commission, Centre City Development Corporation, and San Diego Revitalization Corporation, the development arm of Price Charities. Redevelopment efforts in City Heights have focused on affordable housing, new commercial and retail space, and improved community facilities and public transit – the Metro Career Center and Metro Villas projects build upon this, truly focusing on community needs.

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